

The Scroll of Set

Issue Number 115

Volume XVII-2

April 1991

Editor: Michael A. Aquino VI°

Copyright © 1991 Temple of Set

[1] I Think, Therefore ...

- by Lilith Aquino IV°

It has always been my conviction that nothing is impossible for the human mind to achieve. No matter how far-fetched an idea may seem, if we can conceptualize it then it is possible for it to come into being. In Colin Wilson's *The Mind Parasites* one passage in particular stands out: "But the spaces of the mind are a new dimension. Space extends to infinity outwards, the mind stretches to infinity inwards." At first impression this would seem to refer to space *per se*, but it can also be interpreted as meaning that the capabilities of the **evolved** mind are limitless, bounded only by our own imagination or lack of it!

Numerous volumes have been written setting forth all manner of "mind control" exercises involving complicated and confusing mental gymnastics. I have found the most effective one to be simply sitting quietly and trying to empty my thoughts by concentrating on inner feelings and sensations as they flow through and across my consciousness. This is an exercise in perception and enables the Initiate to become accustomed to "feeling" and "seeing" with the mind's eye. Once this has been perfected to the point where the Initiate can create a personal audio/visual environment even in a crowded, noisy room, a level of control will have been attained which will enable the will to be projected under any circumstances.

One of the identifying characteristics of the Elect is the absence of the need for a formal ritual chamber and all the accouterments it contains. They are enjoyable and expedite/enhance the working but are not, in themselves, crucial to it. The magical abilities of the Elect are completely self-contained within the will. They are as effective in the middle of the day on a crowded bus as they are in the silence and darkness of the ritual chamber.

This kind of power, refined to an infinite level, is formidable and terrifying to the uninitiated but is not considered as such by the Elect. The point is that only our own fears and/or lack of perception and imagination stand in the way of the attainment of our higher self and the abilities that are the manifestation of this being. Once we have eliminated these stumbling blocks and learned to think and perceive on levels which would be considered fantastic or impossible when confronted

by an unevolved mind, we shall have taken the first steps.

At this point one word of caution: Uncontrolled, undirected willpower is worse than useless. As we are refining our wills, we must at the same time perfect our control so that it can be directed with the precision and intensity of a laser beam. This can only be accomplished by continuous practice. It's hard work, boring at times and repetitious, but there are simply no short cuts.

If you are content to "play witch", there are numerous organizations where all you have to do is cough up the cash and **zap**: instant power complete with a guaranteed Magic Kit containing sure-fire-get-your-guy/gal-purple passion oil and various money-health-protection-love-hate-candles in violent outre hues, along with an illustrated how-to pamphlet by Madam/Mister Flimflam. Oh yes, you also get a fill-in-the-blanks piece of paper enabling you to call yourself by whatever exalted title you can dream up. I don't think I have to tell you that the only kind of power this approach will get you is the purchasing power of the cash with which you are willing to part!

Attainment of the higher self can be accomplished only by the conscious and deliberate evolution of our minds and wills to infinite levels of unbounded and ever increasing perception, imagination, and ability. It's not easy, and it won't happen overnight, but there are no free rides in the Temple. Each of us is responsible for personal initiation. Those who neglect or choose not to utilize this Gift of Set are neither Setian nor Elect, but are players in a futile game whose ultimate conclusion is cessation of the self, and the defeat of one's aspirations to immortality. True oblivion!

[2] When the Stars Come Right Again

- by Patty A. Hardy III°

We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little, but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. - H.P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

The identification of mundane awareness as a form of protective ignorance is a constant theme in the Lovecraft Mythos. Lovecraft regarded science as a possible exception, but, as the previous quote shows, he thought that aside from a small elite mankind was incapable of accepting the truth. [Thus the motto ascribed to Miskatonic University: "The

Truth Shall Make You Flee.”] In his view the universe, and the means of discovering it, would remain a fearful mystery to most humans. Symbols of this fear appear throughout the Mythos.

The Mythos admits no celestial promise of cosmic benevolence; quite the contrary. In such tales as *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* Lovecraft distinguishes “the mild gods of Earth” from the incomprehensible alien gods whose envoy is the diabolic Nyarlathotep. The distinction is easily grasped by anyone who compares the antics of rustic nature gods to the machinations of the Powers of Darkness. There is little Pan teaches that is not known to the beasts, as one may verify at any Wiccan festival. With the Prince of Darkness, under whatever name, it is a different story. Only the most persistent seeker, who leaves familiar haunts and wanders the cold wastes of Kadath, will encounter Nyarlathotep. And the brush with Nyarlathotep - as with Loki, Tezcatlipoca, and Mephistopheles - involves truth, deception, choice, risk - all matters of the psyche.

Another Mythos theme also found in “occult” lore is the **gate**. Gates link consensus reality and other realms of time and space. The presence of such gates is marked by baleful folklore and religious superstition. Stone circles appear in both *The Dunwich Horror* and in *The Lurker at the Threshold* as such gates. They are used by some, discovered and explored by others; but for most they are regarded with awe or dread.

Outside fictional accounts such “occult” structures point to startling perspectives on the part of their architects. These structures **are** gates - material signs of the door between the known and the unknown, between the terrestrial and the cosmic. Yet even today this is recognized by only a tiny elite. For every person who reads Hawkins’ analysis of the astronomical nature of the megalithic circles in *Stonehenge Decoded*, there are hundreds of thousands who will tell you that these were the sites of “Druid sacrifices”. Similarly, for every Setian who reads Lockyer’s *Dawn of Astronomy*, there are thousands of New Agers who believe in “pyramid power” and millions of folks whose ideas about the Pyramids come from watching *Land of the Pharaohs*.

Never was I more astonished than when I read [in #1J] that ignorant rendering of ancient astronomy had converted the Precession - the “fall” of the constellation *Draco* from the axis of the sky in 3000 BCE and its return to that position in 26,000 years - into Biblical myths of the fall and future rise of the Dragon of “Revelations”! Ia Shub-Niggurath! May the Gifted of Set rule on a thousand worlds when that night falls on Terra - when the stars come right again!

Returning to the magical use of such symbols in the Mythos: These links with the Beyond may be incorporated into Setian workings in order to destroy old horizons and bring new ones into being. Recall the discussion of GBM in *Black Magic*: “It is in the process of making the preliminary exploration of the subjective and objective universes that the Black Magician begins to discover and ultimately to know how things really work.”

What are some of the guidelines that may be considered in workings incorporating Lovecraftian themes?

First, explore the range of human response to the unknown. *Xeper* is the principle which transformed apelike creatures into modern humans and which will ultimately transform modern humans into other forms; nor is there reason to think that we are alone. Read science fiction stories on “first contact”, and analyze the authors’ tacit beliefs. Compare them to your own. Read historical accounts of contacts between different human cultures; read a text on anthropology. Enhanced imagination and improved capacity to cope with both the familiar and the alien will aid the creation of successful Workings.

Consider, for example, the use of “Yuggothic” in the Lovecraftian rituals written by Dr. Aquino for *The Satanic Rituals*. The commentary on these rituals in his *Church of Satan* describes the reasoning behind Yuggothic: a synthetic language that would reasonably convey the mentality ascribed to the non-human, extra-terrestrial Old Ones. Contrast this with the mindless New Age practice of “channeling”. “Channels” never find it odd that dolphin group minds, Lemurian Masters, and Space Brothers from the Pleiades use perfect English, nor do they think of the problems of interpretation such as typically concern UN translators and diplomats. They take it at face value. Even as fantasy this is woefully lacking. For the sake of ETs and humanity alike, we must hope that none of these “channels” is involved when Arachnids from Denebola stop by.

Second, put aside the naturalistic formula “technology vs. magic”. The Lovecraftian concept of magic as futuristic, alien technology calls for “mad scientist” toys as well as the use of lighting, optical illusions, electronic sound, and other techniques to help detach spatial and temporal awareness from their usual moorings. Many devices sold for advertising or parties, such as light ropes, strobes, and laser-light displays, can be adapted for this purpose. By now many Setians have experimented with plasma globes from Radio Shack and other sources; I have even seen a battery-operated model capable of perching on a crystal ball stand.

One ritual chamber I know of has a number of mirrors suspended by wires in an irregular radial pattern over an altar positioned in the corner, thus producing multiple reflections. UV-sensitive paint and string may be used along with black lights to construct geometric structures “floating” in the chamber.

As for sound, Lovecraftian Workings benefit from certain types of industrial and synthesizer music. Avoid “cosmic lullabies”. Look for pure sweep tones and hair-prickling atonal mixes with strange rhythms, vaguely akin to the sounds heard near a jungle stream at dusk yet evocative of polar vistas or deep space. One favorite selection of mine comes from *The Insect Musicians* by Graeme Revell - a Middle-Eastern drone created entirely from sampled and reprocessed sounds of several kinds of insects.

For me, conventional incense does not really fit in a Lovecraftian rite. I have not used a negative ion generator, but they are recommended by other techno-sorcerers for their influence on the chamber atmosphere. Everything in the chamber must in one way or another reinforce the sense of approach to the unknown, of strange geometries and plasticity in the flow of time.

Ponder *Runa*, and let your exploration be twofold. Address both the subjective meaning of the desire and the means of its objective fulfillment: the Abyss Within and the Abyss Beyond. Then the results of your Work may exceed your expectations. I affirm this having no certainty that I will attain the ultimate goal of by quest, and offering no guarantee that you will reach yours - but **be prepared**.

[3] Dream Time

- by David J. Hohl I°

In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming. - H.P. Lovecraft

How would you like to have a vacation for ten days out of the month, every month of the year? Average people do, only they are either asleep on this vacation or have no control over where they go or whom they see. I'm talking about sleeping. One-third of our lives is spent in sleep, yet very few people use it to their advantage.

The first step in this process is **dream recall**, stimulated by the desire to remember and involving keeping a daily record of your dreams. After almost one year of practice and daily record-keeping, I have succeeded in dream control.

The second phase is **lucidity**, which is difficult for most but increases with practice. Lucidity is knowing you are in a dream and remaining there

and remembering it as though it were “real”.

Dr. Stephen LaBerge of the Stanford University Sleep Research Center has proven that dream lucidity is possible by having subjects display prearranged signals during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. Usually the first signal is given when the subject realizes he is dreaming, the second one when he begins a controlled task, the third when he completes it, and the final one when he thinks he has awakened. These signals are then checked against graphs that confirm REM and therefore that the subject was dreaming.

The third phase is **dream control**: the ability to create what you wish while in a dream. I realized I was dreaming accomplishing something impossible in non-dream time. Once I was successful, I knew I was dreaming. At this point I almost woke from excitement, which is common in lucid dreaming, but I was able to calm down. I created a background and people and successfully interacted with them. It was then that I was woken by a voice. Who woke me at 5:19 AM? It was Al Bundy from the television show *Married With Children*. After explaining to Al how upset I was, I really woke up. I couldn't get back to sleep after that, thinking of my first proficient dream control. I couldn't help thinking of some outside force snickering, “How dare you try to control my domain. I've tricked you out and have won back my time.” I thought back to this imagined entity: “I've tasted control once, and now I'll only get more each time until dream-time is all mine.”

Later in the day I researched the trick this entity used to yank me out of lucidity. I discovered that false awakenings by lucid dreamers are common. Sometimes they are experienced many times before one actually awakes.

For anyone interested in lucid dreaming, I recommend two excellent books on the subject: *Creative Dreaming* by Dr. Patricia Garfield and *Lucid Dreaming* by Dr. Stephen LaBerge. Both are available in Ballantine paperback.

[4] Astral Projection Revisited

- by Brian Zimmer III°

Of all the topics Initiates write to me about, the one issue that seems to concern and consume them most is that of Astral projection. When the December XXIV issue of the *Scroll* featured Adept Adam Campbell's very fine article “Black Magic and Astral Projection”, I thought perhaps that was the last we would hear about Astral travel for awhile. I felt then, as now, that Campbell's balanced presentation was as cogent a statement and as near a theoretical “last word” on the topic as we were likely to get.

The crux of what I believe to be the central point of confusion among Initiates concerning Astral projection lies in an unformed - as opposed to uninformed - concept of the objective and subjective universes. It is important for Initiates to understand that our Setian differentiation between the two "worlds" is not only unique to the Temple of Set's approach to occultism but is something relatively new to human consciousness and understanding altogether. It is no exaggeration to claim that this differentiation makes possible the liberation of the Black Magician from the constraints of race, culture, and even time.

Rather than resort to the involuntary processes of neo-pagans who seek to return to former ignorance and a savage mentality perceiving the worlds as unified and failing to define or distinguish states of consciousness intelligently, the Setian magician recognizes not only the intellectual need but the magical **usefulness** of such discrimination in his/her reckoning of reality. It is clearly one thing for a Right-Hand Path shaman or cabalist to speak of traveling in subterranean earth realms or on the violet plane of Yesod, and quite another matter entirely for a Black Magician to describe a journey to and possible encounter with the Abyss.

In terms of literal truth, and depending upon the extent of the white magician's interpretation of phenomena, he/she often risks the incredulousness of the audience. The Black Magician, on the other hand, because of precise understanding and operation of the machinery of the objective and subjective universes, may assimilate and relate experiences, both rational and suprarational, without offending the constructs of an open, critical sensibility. It does not matter in the least which position one takes as to the literal existence of the Astral plane.

The bottom line remains the same: The experience of the Astral is **always subjective**, corroborating details brought back by Astral travelers notwithstanding. Those details which appear to confirm location or place on the terrestrial plane can always be ascribed to more plausible theories than that of the Astral body leaving the physical body. Accounts related by ancient or modern "authorities" of encounters with entities and environments merely speaks to the impressionability of the individual psyche undergoing the experience rather than to anything approaching objective credibility. The Setian concept of two co-existing universes, each influencing the other by what tentatively might be described as "resonance" via a Magical Link, is the only metaphysical theory that avoids the psychic schizophrenia inherent in other magical systems.

One has to pause and wonder why it seems important to certain magicians that subjective states find correlatives in the objective universe. I often suspect a residual fear of extinction to be at the root of this insistence upon other worlds and realms which are clearly not so very "other" or different from our own. As Black Magicians, however, we must strive to face down such fears and reject resorting to emotionally soothing fantasies that render conscious existence a little less precarious or harrowing than it may be. If it is safety and comfort you seek, you are in the wrong place and on the wrong path.

To those of you who find the idea of Astral projection intriguing and useful - and there are valid reasons for becoming proficient in the technique - I urge you to continue your research and experimentation. I also urge you to exercise your critical faculties and leave your biases at the door of the ritual chamber, relying more upon personal empiricism than upon what you have read or decided beforehand. With time and patience you will gain both experience and understanding of what is "going on". You will cease to worry about "really doing it" once you have mastered the tool and placed it in proper perspective. Above all bear in mind that there is a great deal more to *Xeper* and initiation than expertise in Astral projection.

[5] **Georgia-I Regional Conclave Report** - by Curtis Rowlett III^o

Those of you who may have detected a "disturbance in the Force" last February may rest easy; it was only the first annual gathering of the Temple's southeastern Initiates in Brunswick, Georgia. Present at Georgia-I were Ipsissimus Lewis, Priest Rowlett, and Adepti Hinson, Johnson, & self.

Arriving early in the day, we began with a journey to area bookstores and dining establishments. Brunswick has a variety of restaurants, and these were indulged in accordingly. As is typical with any gathering of Setians, a wide range of topics was discussed - perhaps most notable the Word *Runa* and its viability within the Æon. Other topics included the joys/pains of producing a newsletter, LBM/GBM, the Temple's degree system, and - on a lighter note - such B-grade, "so-bad-they-are-good" horror movies as *Robot Monster* and *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

Ipsissimus Lewis prepared a rite especially for Georgia-I entitled *The Manifestation of our Setian Essence*, which was performed in the evening with all Initiates present. The ritual was a celebration of Setians meeting together to indulge in the unique presence of one another. Included in the rite were

two formal Recognitions: Curtis Rowlett to the Priesthood of Set III° (performed by Ipsissimus Lewis) and Vaughn Self to Adept II° (performed by Priest Rowlett).

I'm sure that I can speak for everyone present when I say that the rite was a wonderful example of the combining of an illustrative Working with an operative one. After the rite was concluded we spent more time in conversation and then made a quick trip to nearby St. Simons Island to be near the ocean. [What journey to the coast would be complete without a look at the home of Leviathan?]

All in all Georgia-I was a pleasure to attend, giving each of us a chance to "recharge batteries" and - for a few - to meet face to face for the first time.

This was also the first time that all members of the Bifrost Pylon were in the same room together and able to share input on the Pylon newsletter. A Georgia-II Mini-Conclave was tentatively scheduled for May XXVI, so any Initiates interested in attending may contact me for details.

[6] Thresholds and Alchemy: Rites of Passage in Initiation

- by Ronald L. Barrett III°

Introduction

I begin this article with an image of the Black Magician as an eccentric and ingenious inventor rummaging through junkyards in search of spare parts and inspiration. He sifts through piles of trash discarded by a sleeping populous, and occasionally discovers a widget to fit into his fantastic machine. These junkyards, the widgets, and the fantastic machine, are all the products of human intelligence that form the environment in which the black magician conducts his Initiation - they are his "culture".

My reason for this metaphorical introduction is that, as a Black Magician and student of anthropology, I have conducted my Initiatory researches with a license to collect junk. This has been a lot of fun. It has also been accompanied by the less exhilarating task of rummaging through a whole lot of language concerning the junk piles: theories that attempt to describe and explain a variety of cultural phenomena. Most are considerably less valuable than their supporting data. Occasionally, however, a widget can be found in the junkpile.

This article discusses one such widget, the rite of passage. And while I'm sure that most Initiates are familiar with this concept, I believe it a worthy topic of further investigation within the context of Initiation. Rites of passage exist in many forms throughout all cultures, yet all employ a similar

formula which, when employed with the conscious will of the black magician, can prove to be a powerful tool of self-transformation.

The Threshold Defined

A popular image of the rite of passage runs something like a *National Geographic* film: a group of primitive adolescent males, wearing nothing but mud and paint, forcibly held to the ground while their foreskins are sliced off. This image is not an incorrect one. Many primitive societies engage in puberty rites involving ritual mutilation. In many of these cases, these sorts of rituals bring about a punctuated and indelible mark of adulthood on an otherwise continuous process of biological maturation. Circumcision, by the way, is but a tame example of the spectrum of horrors that some societies impose on their members.

While puberty ceremonies provide some vivid examples of rites of passage, they are only a small subset under a much larger heading. Rites of passage exist in the forms of marriage ceremonies, funerals, coronations, and inductions into secret societies. They are military training programs, and they are journeys into foreign lands - any instance involving a symbolic transformation in the identity of a person or group of persons that marks their passage from one cultural category to the next. Through basic training the civilian becomes soldier. Through medical school the student becomes doctor. Through ordination the layman becomes priest. Through ... a threshold.

The threshold is the essential structure of these many different cultural practices. It is the common denominator by which they come to be known as rites of passage. And if this strikes a deep cord within the reader, it is well that it should. The threshold is a powerful archetype in Initiation, and its forms can be seen throughout the Left-Hand Path: in the Pylons of the Temple, the Gates opened in magical work, and the "keys" which suggest the opening of doorways to hidden knowledge.

Setian culture is filled with rites of passage. They exist in our Workings, our Recognitions of Initiatory degrees, and those individual endeavors in which we move, by *Xeper*, further down the Left-Hand Path. The question then arises: If we are so different from profane society, and if rites of passage pervade what we do, then how do we distinguish our thresholds from those belonging to the rest of humanity?

The difference is one of principle rather than form. Our thresholds are as black as the rest of our magic. While many elements of our rituals and symbols have their RHP analogs, it is not what we use but how we use it, that distinguishes our work. In Initiation, the conscious will of the self is the

source, means, and recipient of transformation. Symbols and rituals are but tools of assistance to be employed in this process of self-directed self-transformation. Therefore, in the context of Initiation, rites of passage are but another weapon in the arsenal of the Black Magician.

It is for the principle of consciousness that I believe rites of passage to be worthy of closer examination. This is something that we do, but don't always pay attention to. So having defined the Setian Threshold, I would now like to discuss some of its mechanics.

Threshold Mechanics

The empowering aspect of the rite of passage lies in its significance as a life experience. It is not only performed, but must be lived through. A rite of passage is more than just a single event, but rather a whole sequence of experiences having symbolic significance to the passenger such that he uses them in the transformation of his identity. For this reason, these rites may contain little, if any, formal ritual elements.

The threshold, or liminal rites within a rite of passage can be placed into a threefold model of preliminal, liminal, and postliminal rites. This model has been applied by scholars attempting to chart the movements of people between social groups as: (1) rites of separation, in which the participant is removed from his previous cultural status; (2) rites of transition, in which the status of the participant is undefined, or lower than when he first began the rite of passage; and, (3) rites of incorporation, in which the participant obtains his new status, and is recognized into the new group.

It is within the liminal, or transition rites, that some of the more interesting cultural phenomena take place. Having been stripped of his old status, and not yet recognized into the new, the participant exists for awhile "betwixt and between" the categories of his culture. In some cultures he is held in a kind of limbo, an outsider without a name. In others he undergoes a role reversal, being forced to undergo a series of grueling tests and humiliations. In both instances, this phase has often been seen as a form of death.

The threshold sequence has also been described as a movement from one structure to the other through a process of antistructure. It is here where the Initiate can find esoteric application, because this mechanism is homologous to that of alchemical transformation.

The esoteric tradition of the alchemist, whether ascribed or historical, is one wherein the researcher identifies the metals of the outer world, with those of his inner self. Through the manipulation of one, he learns to manipulate the other. Eventually he reaches

a point of enlightenment, the philosopher's stone, by which he is able to change base metals into gold in both realms.

The central mechanism of alchemical transformation is based on the perception of that all "substances" exist as some combination of elements. These combinations - the relative numbers of elements, their relations, and their geometric configurations - that determine the unique properties of a given substance. Change occurs when these combinations are broken down into smaller components, recombined, and then synthesized to form new substances - new kinds of matter.

This is the threshold of alchemy: matter undergoes its preliminal rite of breakdown, and postliminal rite of recombination. Somewhere in between, its components exist in a kind of liminal limbo - undefined and undetermined. This is a necessary phase in the process of transformation. It is a period of partial entropy, a momentarily turbulent fluid which allows for the possibility of new combinations - chaos.

The mechanisms of rites of passage and alchemical change are the same. They are thresholds of transformation, and with this consciousness they are tools. Just as the alchemist uses his knowledge to transform the matter of his self, so the passenger uses his experiences towards the formation of a new identity.

Applications

Tools are meant to be used. The best way to learn more about rites of passage is to design your own, and then go through it. I have therefore chosen to finish this article with an outline of ideas and recommended reading for further applications. I also encourage any Initiates with experiences or ideas in this area to contact me. This is a primary topic in my researches, and I am always looking to expand my knowledge base.

Suggestions for Building Your Own Rite of Passage

1. There are a lot of cultural institutions which have rites of passage in some sort of prepackaged form. Places of work, military organizations, universities, and "secret" societies are full of them. Try selecting one of these. Modify its structure, and expand its meaning into something of greater personal significance. This is particularly useful for those Initiates who find themselves in such circumstances anyway.

2. Consider a more primitive rite of passage - an ancestral ECI of sorts. Inspiration can be found in various kinds of anthropological literature, both popular and academic, and in documentary films. I would really like to hear of anyone doing this, but

caution Initiates against nature excursions alone or without adequate preparation.

3. Objective challenges test the will, and provide useful feedback concerning strengths and weaknesses. They make for very good central components in a rite of passage, and can form powerful combinations when linked with ritual.

4. The acquisition of hidden knowledge is as good a reason for embarking on a rite of passage as any. This knowledge need not be a deliberately concealed secret. It could be a subject of which you have great interest, but little or no background; such as a foreign language or musical instrument.

5. Territorial passage is a major metaphor of transformation, and the etymological source of the rite of passage. A rite can be constructed involving travel to new places, in new situations, or by unique means. Foreign lands work particularly well.

6. Separation is a very important element. Try separating as far from your "home life" as possible. This can be accomplished by finding a way to temporarily cease interactions with all the people that you know, taking on a new identity with a different name, or living in a manner that you are not accustomed.

7. The successful completion of a rite of passage deserves some sort of celebration. Figure out some way(s) to reward yourself, and incorporate them into your incorporation. For those so inclined, perhaps the occasion can be marked by some indelible means, such as a tattoo or piercing.

8. For obvious reasons, thresholds are effective symbolism in rites of passage. The list is endless, including: doors, locks and keys, tunnels, bridges, mountains, bodies of water, territorial and cultural boundaries.

9. Death and rebirth are powerful motifs in many rites around the world. Consider a way to symbolically enact this within a ritual setting.

10. Like New Year's Eve and Conclave, rites of passage are punctuated moments of time which afford a good opportunity for resolutions. Consider your rite of passage as lever for changing the way in which you live.

11. My final suggestion deals with safety. Control is an essential element to Black Magic. This includes having an awareness of dangers and limitations, and putting some time into prior planning and research. With a series of nets under the tightrope, the magician will always live to try another day whether he makes it or not. The one who does not is a fool.

Recommended Reading

Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth by Mircea Eliade. N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1958. A good tour through various forms

of ritual transformation by a well-known religious studies scholar. While Eliade's descriptions of symbolism are good, his analysis is heavily biased with an RHP notion of a collective consciousness in terms of a singular external god-form enacted, and he sees this in all manner of sacred cultural practices.

Asylums by Erving Goffman. N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961. A set of three essays from his sociological studies of mental institutions. Goffman's first essay, "Characteristics of Total Institutions", describes the rites of passage by which ordinary citizens become mental patients, convicts, and prisoners of war. A insightful analysis with potential LBM applications.

Initiation: Ritual Drama and Secret Knowledge Across the World by Jean La Fontaine. N.Y.: Viking Penguin, 1985. So far the best book I have read on the subject. Her introductory chapter gives a very concise survey of theoretical works to date. The remainder of the book explores rites of passage in secret societies, ecstatic religions, and life-crisis rituals. If you read only one book on rites of passage, this is it.

The Men From the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America by Ray Raphael. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988. The latest theoretical contribution is a gender study by a sensitive new age guy. While Raphael is truly sickening, his interviews yield some entertaining examples of custom designed rites of passage.

The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure by Victor Turner. Chicago: Aldine, 1969. A good theoretical contribution on threshold mechanics if you ignore his RHP quest for generic humanity.

The Threshold Covenant: or, The Beginning of Religious Rites by Henry Clay Trumbull. N.Y.: Scribner's, 1906. With the exception of its introduction, the book is entirely descriptive - a continuous chain of symbolic thresholds throughout the world. This was one of Van Gennep's inspirations, and a challenge for the collector of rare books.

Les Rites De Passage by Arnold Van Gennep (1909). English edition translated by M.B. Vizedom and G.L. Caffee. Chicago: U. Chicago Press, 1960. By the man who coined the term, and gave it the three-part model. Many have cited this book, but few have actually read it. This is unfortunate because it is original and well written - a close second to La Fontaine.

[7] Meeting Place

- by Patty A. Hardy III°

The dragon looked down, far down, perched on the grey-black basalt rock, talons gripping the

broken edges, and folded its wings languidly. The wind was strong here, and the view was fine indeed: below, red sands, with dark roads looped among the dunes, waxy, dull-green thickets along dry and cracked rain-riverbeds, strange chocolate-brown mountains in the distance.

Some things, the dragon thought, are better experienced than explained. Eight floors down in the hotel, a young man studied strange words, and their translation. "Adgt upaah zongom faaip sald ... Can the wings of the wind understand your voices of wonder?"

Other dragons were circling. Their shrieks echoed and re-echoed along the ledges. Presently one descended, gliding as if weightless. It canted and stalled, and seized on the stone, tail wrapped like a serpent around the rough edges, talons spread, most definitely not weightless.

I know this one, the first dragon thought. Used to be a DP manager. His jet scales shimmered blue and gold spangles. His eyes were like diamonds.

"Issstrue ..." the first dragon hissed, slow and dreamily. "Isslike ... on-a-cliff, and seeing the horizzzone ..."

"And when we awaken..." the second said, equally slowly, more precisely, eyes aglitter, "how we ... roar."

Chemicals? We don't need no stinking chemicals. Except incense; the nonsense of innocence so intense that pupils widen to gather every photon, yet nary a rogue neurotransmitter in the fleshwork. Can you get high on frankincense? What do the hotel people think of this? Hell. It can't be any more weird than the Shriners.

But for fear.

Only fear.

Of course, you can't tell by looking. By hearing, perhaps. The hatchlings are hearers. They are blind for a time after coming forth, and so their discriminative capacity is applied to what they hear. Sight comes later. For this reason dragons are charmed by music more than any vision, and they will listen to anything seeking the sense of it. But it would be wrong to think that the dragons do not appreciate what they see. Rather, they grasp the value of not being seen.

[8] **MehenPetTha**

- by Don Webb III°

In the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* Set mentions his High Priest MehenPetTha. Only four men rate direct mention in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*: Aleister Crowley, Anton LaVey, Michael Aquino, and MehenPetTha. I decided to seek after this mysterious figure. I hope that these speculations may begin to move us closer to truth.

1. The name is a "priestly" or magical one. Whereas these phonemes can be rendered into hieroglyphics in different ways, the most likely interpretation is "The man who rends Mehen". Mehen is a serpent god in the Tuat, of which more later. This seems to be the only Egyptian name where somebody does something to a god [rather than "praise", "magnify", etc.]. However there is a long-standing magical practice of coercing gods. This appears as early as the "Cannibal Hymn" in the *Pyramid Texts* and continues into Græco-Roman times when the name of Set is invoked to threaten other gods into doing their work. I suspect that this name was chosen for magical reasons and therefore will repay study.

2. The name is from the Middle or New Kingdom. I have assumed that it was a very early name, beginning with the first worship of Set. However the name of the god Mehen doesn't appear until the end of the Middle Kingdom. The best representations of Mehen appear on the tomb walls of Seti I and Rameses VI, which would place the concept in the XIX/XX Dynasties during the New Kingdom resurgence of the Setian Priesthood. I think that this tells us that this Remanifestation of the Priesthood was an unnatural event. The ruling family of the XIX Dynasty had come from an area in the Delta where Set-worship had remained. Their political and cultural strength may well have derived from the manifestation of the Word of Set.

3. The name indicates a break from the natural order. Mehen is the serpent who protects Afu-Ra in the Tuat. In the *Coffin Texts* he (sometimes she) is represented as coiled round the kiosk on the barge. According to the German Egyptologist Erik Hornung, Mehen, the snake turned backwards on itself, represents a closed space-time model. It protected the "existent" from the "non-existent". Several entities in the Tuat were said to be "nonexistent", notably the serpent Apep. Mehen became the shield which protected Afu-Ra, repeatable ordered existence, from the chaotic. One who would rend Mehen would be someone who opened the veil to something outside the natural order.

4. The name represents the Setian concept of priesthood. As an open to the non-natural, MehenPetTha represents active initiation seeking communion with Set. This is not a passive mystic name - someone waiting for the Outside to push its way in - but the magical name of someone striving to break through. This explains its late appearance. This had to be someone who was aware of the concept of Set, god of the outer places. he knew where to look (beyond Mehen) and how to look (in opposition to the gods of stasis). Daring to take a name which threatened Ra and by extension the

whole of ordered existence must have been a dangerous step in a society based on divine stasis. However this taking of a name from beyond as part of ourselves remains the first step toward that contact.

5. The name indicates an awareness of the "hidden". The notion of piercing a hole to apprehend the unknown - so clearly a part of the Word *Runa* - seems to be at work here. In fact in the *Book of Coming Forth by Night* the first five angles can be found in connection with MehenPetTha. He is described as having been the "first" recipient of the *Word of Set*. Here he had an experience similar to Satanist I° Michael Aquino's receiving the *Diabolicon*. He chose a magical name, MehenPetTha - a step often indicative of the evolutionary consciousness of change connected with the Second Angle. He achieved a direct contact with the Unknown - that is to say he was touched by the hand of Set. This is the Third Angle, where the trapezoid touches the ring. From that point he systematized his knowledge - passing to the Fourth Angle, where the trapezoid again touches the ring. That systemization is associated with the Fourth Angle can be seen in Anton LaVey's work with the Magic Circle before founding the Church of Satan, Michael Aquino's interest in Egyptian concepts as a IV°, R.K. Barrett's work with Anubis before Uttering *Xem*, etc. The systemization gives back to the Unknown and is the basis - the truncated pyramid - from which the Word will be Uttered. MehenPetTha must have passed through this phase so that he could proclaim the *Word of Set* as a V°. I suspect that the earlier Priesthood of Set did not achieve the proclaiming of a Word, although they clearly achieved the IV° - as seen by the first appearance of the trapezoid and the huge cultural leaps of the first three dynasties.

After the *Word of Set* comes the sudden return of the visible Setian tradition in the XIX-XX Dynasties. The first eighteen Parts of the *Word* establish a visible tradition, and their warnings reflect the political and social factors - the rise and fall of that Temple.

The progress of MehenPetTha stops with his V°. There was not a VI° at that time. Set reveals that he was unsure of the effect of the VI° and that his experiment with Anton LaVey might have caused the latter's downfall.

6. The results of MehenPetTha's initiation reveal some of the "hidden"'s effects on history. The re-emergence of Set as an official *netjer*, which reached its zenith in the reign of Rameses II [when the "400 Years Stela" was inscribed], led for the only time in Egyptian history to an interest in the lands outside. This was Egypt's expansionary period, and the Ramesside pharaohs added a fourth

division of troops - the Horses of Set, a fundamental change in their approach to war. [The traditional three divisions were the Hidden of Amon, the Foundry of Ptah, and the Gold of Ra.]

Egypt was also open to new ideas at this time; only now did Egyptians take foreign gods into their pantheon. Notably these gods and goddesses were all identified with Set in some fashion. He was identified with Baal; the Semitic goddesses Astarte and Anat were given to him as wives, etc.

The proclamation of the *Word of Set* brought about a whirlwind of activity, yet its warnings went unheeded and the visible tradition fell. When John Dee and Edward Kelly began reactivating the *Word*, another burst of activity occurred in world civilization - new forms of government, foreign invasion, and scientific revolution. All of these things show a renewed hunger for the "hidden".

7. We note that Set's view of history and mankind is different from ours. By mentioning a man unknown to historical records as equal of note to the first three Magi of this century, Set breaks with the "æonic" system of Florence Farr/Aleister Crowley. The Magi lists of Crowley are absent; fitting the Æon of Set into a long sequence of others is gone. The *Book of Coming Forth by Night* crystallizes the notion of the individual and Set. It also stresses Set's detached and committed nature: Although the Bond is clearly offered to Setians, Set mentions only those humans who have proclaimed a Word.

In the *Book of the Law*, by contrast, HarWer does not give a single clear view of a plan unfolding through millennia. In fact Crowley's god chose to manifest through Crowley's own self rather than by standing apart; hence the *Book* is filled with prophecies concerning Crowley's personal life rather than his mission. Because of this Crowley never saw HarWer's manifestation as the exceedingly rare event it was, and saw himself as the end of a line of Magi all more or less equal. By naming the individuals that he does, Set shows that he has a definite direction and interest in mankind, rather than being just the latest god to hold the reins in a long natural succession.

8. We can find challenge and danger in this example. The *Word of Set* worked great changes in ancient Egypt. But as Set has revealed in his *Word*, he no longer dwells in Egypt. This means that current use of the *Word* may be of global consequence. An examination of the changes that the Church of Satan wrought upon the world - even with the corrupt "Enochian Keys" and crude technology - indicates the raw power the Infernal Mandate has given us. The bestowal of power does not ensure success; indeed it suggests that we must very carefully discover what we wield and how it

becomes manifest. Fortunately ancient Egypt provides some examples of how magic interacts with cultural and political forces.

9. We can see the fate of an Initiate in this example. MehenPetTha's name as High Priest of Set does not remain on stela or papyrus. Only by deduction based on revelation can we begin to place this individual in time. His Work is mirrored in history. Imperial Egypt spread into the world; and when Egypt fell, its reputation for knowledge remained. It was sought out by Pythagoras, Herodotus, and others. Although Set ceased to be a favored deity, and although his images were systematically destroyed by later dynasties, a change was permanently wrought in the consciousness of mankind. In that storm of thought MehenPetTha stands immortal.

[9] The Nyarlathotep Pylon

- by John Felczak II°

The Nyarlathotep Pylon has come into being in historic Point Richmond, California (aka Insmouth-on-the-Pacific) and cordially invites Setians in the San Francisco bay area to join us in performing nameless rites, sharing forbidden knowledge, and fathoming the mysteries of the Abyss. Magister David Austen (sponsor) and Adept John Felczak (Sentinel) extend a warm welcome to all.

Most will remember Nyarlathotep, otherwise known as the Crawling Chaos, as the *neter* of dark knowledge and sinister arcane arts & sciences in the Lovecraftian mythos. He is also the god of 1,000 forms, symbolizing protean adaptiveness and infinite ability to change.

The primary purpose of the Nyarlathotep Pylon will be to provide its members with powerful tools for creating significant, measurable, constructive, willed change in their lives.

Interested Setians in the northern California, Oregon, and Nevada tri-state area are encouraged to write Adept Felczak.

I'a Ry'Gzengrho!